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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if principals who exhibit high or low administrative success differ on the basis of their academic training and professional experience. Results provide some evidence that elementary school principals who exhibit a high degree of scholarship as undergraduate students tend to be more effective; that those who have taken a considerable amount of graduate training in educational administration tend to be more effective than those who have not taken such training; and that those who have had a considerable amount of administrative experience tend to be more effective than inexperienced principals. A greater degree of effectiveness was not found among those who had majored in elementary education as undergraduates; who had taken a considerable amount of graduate training in curriculum and supervision courses and in the social sciences and humanities; or who had had a considerable amount of teaching experience. An extensive bibliography is included. (Author/WM)

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BULLETIN

THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: WHAT TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE FACTORS RELATE TO HIS SUCCESS?

by

Alan J. Rousseau

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by

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What This Study Found:

There is some evidence in the following study that elementary school principals:

1. Who exhibited a high degree of scholarship as undergraduate students tend to be more effective;
2. Who majored in elementary education as undergraduates are no more effective than those who majored in other fields;
3. Who have taken a considerable amount of graduate training in educational administration tend to be more effective than those who have not taken such training;
4. Who have taken a considerable amount of graduate training in curriculum and supervision courses, and in the social sciences and humanities, are no more effective than those who have not taken such training;
5. Who have had a considerable amount of teaching experience are no more effective than those with less experience;
6. Who have had a considerable amount of administrative experience tend to be more effective than inexperienced principals.

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of the elementary school principal's role in determining the quality of the educational program in his school is widely supported in the literature pertaining to school administration. And in the future, "the quality of elementary education will be linked increasingly to the professional preparation, social vision, and consistent courage of elementary school principals."[1]

In order to function in this important leadership role in American education, the elementary school principal needs to be an efficient and highly trained leader of people. It no longer suffices that he simply serve a brief teaching internship and then "be in the right place at the right time."

Goldman summarizes the need for additional competencies necessary for the successful principal when he states:

> The type of role the school principal is being called upon to play in modern education necessitates that he enjoy a high level of professional competency. Historically, successful classroom teachers were selected for the principalship on the assumption that success in teaching was a prediction of success in school administration. Experience over the years has shown, however, that not all successful teachers can become successful school principals. The changing demands for leadership require knowledge and competencies which go beyond those required for success in teaching.[2]

Schutz states that "while there is no question that teachers are the pivotal figures in the education picture, it is clear that their efforts can

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[1]Department of Elementary School Principals, National Education Association, The Elementary School Principalship in 1968 (Washington, D. C.: DESP, 1968), p. 9.

[2]Samuel Goldman, The School Principal (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1966), p. 97.

be and often are limited, subverted or even nullified by poor administrators."[3]

In spite of the importance of the elementary principal's role, those who are responsible for his training, certification and selection are often charged with not knowing, or ignoring, the academic and professional elements that relate to his probable success on the job. According to Gross, "there are many school systems that are selecting principals on grounds that appear to have little empirical justification."[4] Featherstone[5] states that the problem is due to the absence of evidence about selection criteria for principals. He goes on to say that much attention has been given to the problem of teacher selection and the prediction of teacher efficiency but that little attention has been given to similar problems regarding the selection of administrative personnel for schools. He adds that this is especially true of the elementary schools.

Institutions of higher learning that are charged with training school administrators base their programs on the assumption that administrative skills can be learned. Morphet supports the function of administrative training programs when he states:

> Actually, most of the personality traits or characteristics that have been found to be associated with leadership should be classified as skills or competencies rather than personality traits. Therefore, it should be possible within limits to attain these skills and competencies through an appropriate program of learning experiences. This emphasizes the importance of preparation programs for school administrators.[6]

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[3]William C. Schutz, Leaders of Schools (Berkeley: University of California, 1966), p. 1.

[4]Neal Gross and Robert E. Herriott, Staff Leadership in Public Schools (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965), p. 157.

[5]R. L. Featherstone, "Selection of Elementary School Principals in Ohio Cities," Education Research Bulletin, XXXIV (September, 1955), 153.

[6]Edgar L. Morphet, Roe L. Johns, and Theodore L. Reller, Educational Organization and Administration (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 126.

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

Effective training programs and administrative selection procedures need to be based on evidence that shows a clear relationship between such programs and procedures and the success of the working administrator. This raises a question as to what aspects of an administrator's formal training, academic and on-the-job experiences, tend to make him more effective as an administrator. More specifically, what types of training and experiences are related to the success of the elementary school principal?

Undergraduate Training

One area of the principal's academic background that is open to speculation is the relationship of his performance and training as an undergraduate student to his subsequent success as an elementary school administrator. Jacobson[7] states that the average person who occupies a position of leadership exceeds the average member of his group in both intelligence and scholarship. Does this mean that intelligence and scholarship are closely enough related that undergraduate achievement is an adequate measure of intelligence? Stogdill contends that it does when he states:

> Leaders are found, with a high degree of uniformity, to make better average scholastic grades than do non-leaders. These results are not surprising in light of the fact that leaders are found to be more intelligent on the average than their followers.[8]

In view of these statements, it is interesting to speculate whether the scholastic performance of an elementary principal as an undergraduate student has any relationship to his ability as a school administrator.

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[7]Paul B. Jacobson, William C. Reavis, and James D. Logsdon, The Effective School Principal (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 88.

[8]Ralph M. Stogdill, "Personal Factors Associated with Leadership: A Survey of the Literature," The Journal of Psychology, XXV (January, 1948), 46.

The question can also be raised about the content of undergraduate training and its relationship to administrative success. Some elementary principals specialized in elementary education as undergraduate students while others chose a major field of study in other academic areas. It is reasonable to assume that elementary principals need to have a basic knowledge of teaching skills and techniques in order to be effective administrators. However, does this mean that undergraduate elementary teaching preparation is necessary to acquire these skills or can they be acquired in other ways? In other words, does a relationship exist between the successful elementary principal and his undergraduate study of elementary education?

Graduate Training

The relationship of graduate level course work to administrative success is questioned by some authorities. However, administrative certification and graduate degree programs contain many specific course requirements. Schutz is skeptical of these requirements when he states:

> The emphasis in the traditional education administration curriculum seems misplaced. Although some schools are beginning to change, the characteristic course load emphasizes what has here been called technical knowledge; that is, school law, finance, organization, building, etc. While this knowledge is obviously essential, its mastery seems to have little or no relation to administrative success. A small portion of the administrator's efforts involve these factors while a very high proportion of training time is devoted to it. On the other hand, several areas that occupy a very large portion of the administrator's time are given relatively little attention in the curriculum.[9]

Schutz goes on to suggest that graduate programs for school administrators should emphasize training in human relations, training in scientific method, and organization and community theory.[10] It seems apparent that Schutz is concerned about two factors in graduate preparation of administrators, (1) the questionable effectiveness of "skill" courses in educational administration, and (2) the need for more training in the social sciences and humanities. The question follows, then, whether the elementary school

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[9]Schutz, op. cit., p. 32.

[10]Ibid., p. 33.

principal who has had substantial training in various subject areas--educational administration, curriculum and supervision, social sciences, and humanities--is more likely to be successful as a school administrator than those who have had less training in those fields.

Teaching Experience

The relationship of prior teaching experience to the success of the elementary school principal is a question that seems to warrant investigation. Even though most administrative certification programs require some teaching on the level to be administered, the amount of teaching experience that is most desirable is in question. McIntyre, in commenting about prerequisites for the selection of elementary school principals, states:

> . . . there seems to be a growing insistence that the teaching experience be at the elementary school level. The proposition that principals without teaching experience might serve competently has not been adequately tested, and it probably will not be in the foreseeable future.[11]

On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that an elementary school principal would be able to successfully perform his duties without a first-hand understanding of the teaching act which might be learned best as a practicing teacher. Nation's Schools,[12] in reporting information regarding selection of elementary principals, found that teaching experience is high on the list of criteria used by many school districts.

It seems clear that the amount of teaching experience necessary for successful school principals has not been determined, yet many school districts and certification agencies include teaching experience as a prerequisite for administrative positions. It is interesting to speculate whether this requirement is a reasonable one. Or can elementary school principals operate just as effectively without such experiences?

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[11]Kenneth E. McIntyre, "The Selection of Elementary School Principals," The National Elementary Principal, XLIV (April, 1965), 43.

[12]"Researchers Tell What to Ask and What to Ignore in Hiring Principals," Nation's Schools, LXXVI (July, 1965), 62.

Administrative Experience

School districts commonly base their administrative salaries on the length of administrative service. The underlying assumption seems to be that administrators become more effective with additional experience. Gordon[13] states that the desirable length of administrative experience is four to six years when considering the selection of elementary school principals. Does this mean that the effectiveness of elementary school principals with more than six years of experience diminishes? Some authors suggest that age and administrative experience should be considered together to have any relevance to administrative success. These positions, therefore, cause speculation about the relationship of administrative experience to the effectiveness of elementary school principals.

Summary

These, then, are the basic questions which are found in the literature dealing with academic and experience variables that may be related to the success of the elementary school principal. This is not to infer that these are the only points of view expressed on the subject. Rather, this brief overview is intended to establish the basis for the study which will attempt to deal with the issues raised.

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[13]Joan Claire Gordon, "Selection of Elementary School Principals," The National Elementary Principal, VL (April, 1966), 63.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary purpose of this study is to determine if principals who have exhibited high or low administrative success differ on the basis of their academic training and professional experience.

As a basis for establishing the hypotheses, the following questions were developed:

1. Do principals who have exhibited high success in their administrative performance differ on the basis of their undergraduate training from those who have exhibited low success?
2. Do principals who have exhibited high success in their administrative performance differ on the basis of their graduate training from those who have exhibited low success?
3. Do principals who have exhibited high success in their administrative performance differ on the basis of their professional experience from those who have exhibited low success?

From the preceding questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis One

It may be argued that a high order of intelligence is necessary to effectively perform the many organizational and interpersonal tasks that are inherent in the elementary school principalship. Academic performance as an undergraduate student is considered by some to be a measure of the individual's intellectual ability. It is hypothesized, therefore, that:

H_1 Elementary school principals in the high success category will have significantly higher grade point averages (GPA's) than those in the low success category.

Hypothesis Two

The nature of the undergraduate preparation is often omitted when examining relationships to the success of the elementary principal. A question of particular interest is the relationship of elementary teacher

preparation programs to the subsequent success of the principal. It can be argued that those who chose elementary education early in their careers, and were prepared specifically to work with elementary age children, have more knowledge and understanding of the problems which face elementary school administrators. It is hypothesized, therefore, that:

H_2 Elementary school principals who were undergraduate elementary education majors will have significantly higher Perception of Administrative Interaction (PAI) scores than those who majored in other undergraduate fields of study.

Hypotheses Three, Four, Five

Certification requirements often contain a prescribed amount of graduate training before credentials are granted to school administrators. Granting of degrees is based primarily on quantitative course work established by the institution. Yet opinion is still divided on the value of graduate courses for the school principal. Required graduate courses for administrative certification, or for an advanced degree in school administration, normally can be divided into three categories:

1. Graduate courses in educational administration
2. Graduate courses in curriculum and supervision
3. Graduate courses in the social sciences and humanities

Graduate courses in educational administration are designed to acquaint the school administrator with basic knowledge in such areas as school finance, school law, building construction and maintenance, and personnel and organizational management. Disagreements exist, however, about the value of such courses. Yet it is difficult to imagine a successful administrator performing his complex tasks without this basic study. It seems reasonable, then, that the administrator who has attained a sound scholastic foundation in these courses will be prepared to perform his duties more effectively. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H_3 Elementary school principals in the high success category will have a significantly greater number of graduate term hours in educational administration courses than those in the low success category.

Graduate courses in curriculum and supervision are required for administrative certification in most states. It is often expressed that school

administrators need to be the "instructional leaders" in their schools. This suggests that they be knowledgeable about curricular theory and development, teaching strategies, instructional innovations, and means for improving instruction. If these assumptions are correct, it follows that the principal's grasp of curriculum and his knowledge of supervisory techniques designed to assist him in implementing curriculum change will relate to his success as a practicing administrator. It is hypothesized, therefore, that:

H_4 Elementary school principals in the high success category will have a significantly greater number of graduate term hours in curriculum and supervision courses than those in the low success category.

Graduate courses in the social sciences and humanities are often required for advanced degrees and administrative certification. The rationale for these requirements seems to be based on the view that they enhance the individual's "general education." It is hoped that an acquaintance with the social sciences and humanities will give the administrator a broader academic base upon which he can meet the challenges of the social forces which he will encounter. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H_5 Elementary school principals in the high success category will have a significantly greater number of graduate term hours in social science and humanities courses than those in the low success category.

Hypotheses Six, Seven

Those who criticize the value of classifying courses in graduate training programs often argue that the value of course work, if any, is derived from the total program of graduate work. In other words, it is the scope of the administrator's preparation that is relevant to his success rather than specific categories of preparation considered in isolation.

H_6 Elementary school principals in the high success category will have a significantly greater number of graduate term hours in education courses than those in the low success category.

H_7 Elementary school principals in the high success category will have a significantly greater number of term hours in all combined graduate courses than those in the low success category.

Hypotheses Eight, Nine

Elementary school principals often pride themselves on being "teachers first, administrators second." Yet there is little evidence to support the notion that elementary teaching experience is related to the principal's success. The effective principal, however, needs to have knowledge pertaining directly to working with students, teachers, parents, and the curriculum in the elementary school setting. He might be able to gain this experience through administrative intern programs, but few intern programs exist except in the very large school districts. Another way to gain these skills is through actual teaching experience. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H_8 Elementary school principals in the high success category will have a significantly greater number of years of elementary school teaching experience than those in the low success category.

Do elementary school principals improve with administrative experience? It would seem logical to assume that principals who have had some experience in their jobs would be better equipped to meet the demands of their administrative responsibilities. Thus it is hypothesized that:

H_9 Elementary school principals in the high success category will have a significantly greater number of years of elementary school principalship experience than those in the low success category.

PROCEDURES

The population for this study consisted of elementary school principals who have exhibited high or low success in administrative performance as perceived by their teaching staffs.

Principals had to meet the following qualifications to be in the overall pool from which the final population was to be determined:

1. Principals of public elementary schools in Oregon who are currently enrolled in the Standard Administrative Certification program at the University of Oregon;
2. Principals of public elementary schools in Oregon having an "average daily membership" of at least 175 students as reported in the 1968-69 Oregon School Directory.[14]

One hundred and sixty-six elementary school principals comprised the total population of principals currently enrolled in the Standard Certification program. One hundred and twenty-eight of these principals met the two qualifications for the study as listed above. This number was further reduced to 80 on the basis of information returned by principals on the first questionnaire. After all data were collected, 64 principals became the final population for data gathering.[15] Table 1 illustrates the reduction of the population of principals from 166 to 64.

Table 1

POPULATION OF PRINCIPALS

Total Population	Principals Who Met Initial Qualifications	Principals Who Met Subsequent Qualifications	Final Population
166	128	80	64

[14]Oregon Board of Education, 1968-69 Oregon School Directory (Salem: State Board of Education, 1968), pp. 2-173.

[15]See p. 16.

The teaching staffs of the 80 principals became the basis for determining a population of teachers. This population was limited by including only regular classroom teachers. Specialists, such as music teachers, physical education teachers, and librarians, were excluded. Furthermore, only teachers who had served at least one school year in their present positions were eligible for inclusion. There were 876 teachers who met the criteria established for determining the population of teachers.

The sample of teachers was obtained by randomly selecting eight teachers from each staff representing the 80 principals.[16] If the staff consisted of less than eight teachers, all were included. No school with less than five teachers was included. By applying these selection criteria, 604 teachers were obtained as a sample. This figure represents 68.9 percent of the total teacher population. The teacher population universe and the sample for this study are noted in Table 2.

Table 2

TEACHER POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Population	Sample	Percentage
876	604	68.9%

The PAI Questionnaire

The primary instrument employed for gathering data was selected by the researcher after reviewing literature which contained numerous instruments for data collection. The four scales selected, measuring administrative performance as perceived by teachers, were developed by Schutz[17] in

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[16] Qualifying teachers from each of the 80 teaching staffs were randomly selected. The sample was drawn by using a table of random numbers to select a maximum of eight and a minimum of five teachers from each staff.

[17] William C. Schutz, Procedures for Identifying Persons with Potential for Public School Administrative Positions (Berkeley: Cooperative Research Project No. 677, University of California, 1961).

his study of administrative personnel in four large California school districts. The 36-item instrument, comprised of four nine-item scales, is known as Perception of Administrative Interaction (PAI).[18] A copy of the PAI questionnaire is in Appendix A. The PAI was selected over other instruments for the following reasons:

1. It contains four dimensions of administrative performance rather than only one dimension often found in other scales.
2. It is appropriate for measuring the administrative behavior of elementary school principals.
3. It has been field tested in at least one major study and was found to be statistically valid and reliable by its author.
4. It can be completed by the respondent in a reasonable length of time.

Each of the 36 items on the PAI questionnaire is a statement related to school functioning. A Likert-type response scale for each item is included. Teacher-respondents were presented with the following alternative reactions to the conditions present in their school:

- Almost always true in my school
- Usually true in my school
- Often true in my school
- Sometimes true in my school
- Rarely true in my school
- Almost never true in my school

The four scales of administrative performance in the PAI questionnaire are administrative decision making, communication, general administrative behavior, and instructional leadership. They are described as follows:

1. Administrative Decision Making

   This nine-item scale measures the principal's ability to anticipate and recognize problems that affect the attainment and objectives for his school. His ability to critically weigh these problems and employ unique solutions is also measured.

2. Communication

   This nine-item scale measures the principal's ability to communicate with staff and community. It also measures the climate that exists for freedom of communications among staff members in the school.

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[18] Ibid., pp. 44-66.

3. General Administrative Behavior

   This scale measures the principal's ability to coordinate and maintain various functions of the school organization. His ability to provide teaching materials, develop duty schedules, supervise building maintenance, provide assistance to teachers and students, and other similar functions is measured.

4. Instructional Leadership

   This scale measures the principal's ability to provide information and leadership in the school's instructional program. He is evaluated on the implementation of new ideas, providing time for teachers' professional growth, examination of current curriculum programs, and other related functions.

Data Collection - Principals

A packet of materials was mailed to each of the 128 elementary school principals at his school. The packet included the following materials:

1. A letter was provided to explain the purpose and procedures of the study and to acknowledge support of the study by the Oregon School Study Council.
2. A letter from the President of the Oregon Elementary School Principals Association indicated the organization's support of the study.
3. A brief questionnaire was included for the principal to complete and return.
4. A form was attached on which the principal was asked to list the names of all certified staff members who had taught under his supervision for at least one school year.

Two weeks after the packets were mailed, a second letter was sent to principals who had not responded, indicating that additional returns of requested materials would be appreciated. After seven weeks had elapsed from the original mailing date, no other returns were accepted for the study. Table 3 shows the number of principals contacted for the collection of data along with the number and percentage of those responding.

Table 3

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES TO REQUEST FOR DATA

Number of Requests Sent	Returns Received	Percentage of Returns
128	114	89.1%

Of the 114 elementary school principals who returned the information requested, 50 did not qualify for the study for the following reasons: (a) the principal chose not to participate in the study; (b) the principal had not served for at least one school year in his present position; (c) the principal was not a full-time supervising administrator during the current school year; (d) data on the principal were not available in the University of Oregon certification files; (e) less than five teachers returned the completed PAI questionnaire.[19] Table 4 shows the number of principals to be included in the study population and reasons some were eliminated.

Table 4

PRINCIPALS QUALIFIED AND NOT QUALIFIED FOR THE STUDY AFTER FINAL DATA COLLECTION

Returns Received		114
Principals Not Qualified		50
Chose not to participate	9	
Principal for less than one year	4	
Not a full-time principal	11	
Transferred to a new assignment	5	
Data unavailable in certification files	5	
Less than five teachers returned PAI questionnaire	16	
Principals Qualified (N) for Study		64

[19] See Teachers, p. 16.

The following data were collected from the initial questionnaire mailed to principals: age, sex, marital status, undergraduate major field of study, number of years of experience as a teaching elementary school principal, number of years of experience as a full-time elementary school principal, and number of years of experience as a full-time elementary school principal in present position.

Additional data were collected about each of the 64 qualified principals from the certification files at the University of Oregon. This information included the following data: the principal's undergraduate grade point average, the number of graduate term hours in educational administration courses, the number of graduate term hours in curriculum and supervision courses, the number of graduate term hours in social science and humanities courses, the number of graduate term hours in education courses, and the number of graduate term hours in all courses.

Data Collection - Teachers

The final phase of data collection was accomplished by sending the PAI questionnaire to the sample of 604 elementary school teachers. A packet of materials was mailed to each of 80 principals. The packet included:

1. A letter to the principal thanking him for his participation in the study and a request to distribute the PAI questionnaires to the teachers named therein;
2. A letter to each teacher explaining the purpose and procedures of the study;
3. A PAI questionnaire for each teacher to be completed and returned.

Three weeks after the initial mailing, a second letter was sent directly to each teacher who had not yet responded. After five weeks had elapsed from the initial mailing date, no other PAI questionnaires were accepted for the study. Table 5 shows the number of teachers who were sent the PAI questionnaire, and the number and percentage of respondents.

Table 5

RETURN OF PAI QUESTIONNAIRES BY TEACHERS

Sample Size	Returns Received	Percentage of Returns
604	475	78.6%

Treatment of the Data

Computation of Mean Response Scores

A mean response score was computed for each principal from the teacher responses on the PAI questionnaire. Each principal's mean response score was computed as follows:

1. A numerical value was assigned to each response that teachers selected regarding each of the 36 statements on the PAI questionnaire.

Value	Response
6	Almost always true in my school
5	Usually true in my school
4	Often true in my school
3	Sometimes true in my school
2	Rarely true in my school
1	Almost never true in my school

2. The numerical values were then added which resulted in a raw score for each scale and a total PAI score.
   PAI Scale 1 Administrative Decision Making (Ques. 1-9)
   PAI Scale 2 Communications (Ques. 10-18)
   PAI Scale 3 General Administrative Behavior (Ques. 19-27)
   PAI Scale 4 Instructional Leadership (Ques. 28-36)
   Total PAI (Ques. 1-36)
3. The raw scores were added and a mean response score for the principal was computed for each scale and for the total PAI score.

	Mean Response Scores				
	PAI 1	PAI 2	PAI 3	PAI 4	Total PAI
Principal A					
Principal B					
Etc.					

Computation of Rank Order

The principals' PAI mean response scores were rank ordered for each scale and for the total. Principals having mean response scores in the highest 40 percent of each scale were assigned to the "high success" category. Principals with scores in the lowest 40 percent of each scale were assigned to the "low success" category. The 20 percent of the scores between the high and low success categories served to make a prominent numerical distinction between them.

Computation of Significant Differences

Significant differences between the means obtained for the high and low success categories were computed for each of the following variables:

1. Undergraduate grade point averages;
2. PAI scores of elementary education majors and those who majored in other fields;
3. Number of graduate term hours in educational administration courses;
4. Number of graduate term hours in curriculum and supervision courses;
5. Number of graduate term hours in social science and humanities courses;
6. Number of graduate term hours in education courses;
7. Number of graduate term hours in all courses combined;
8. Number of years of elementary school teaching experience;
9. Number of years of full-time elementary school administrative experience.

Parametric t-tests were used to compute the significant differences between the means. A detailed explanation of the statistical procedures used in this study is available in the original research document.[20]

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Academic Training

A trend which appeared from the data analyzed for this study may suggest that administrators who exhibit a high degree of scholarship as undergraduate students tend to be more effective. This trend, combined with those trends noted from the literature, prompts the researcher to suggest that more restrictive measures of scholarship and intelligence might be utilized in research to discover the degree of relationship, if any, to administrative effectiveness. The evidence that exists also prompts the researcher to conclude that scholarship should be one of the factors worthy of consideration by those who are responsible for selecting elementary school principals.

Principals who were undergraduate elementary education majors seem to be as effective in their administrative performance as those who majored in other fields. Although literature does contain contradictory findings about the influence of a major on administrative effectiveness, a slight trend appeared in this study which would tend to favor those principals who chose elementary education early in their professional training. It might be speculated, however, that differences between the two groups are minimal for the following reasons: (a) all elementary principals must have a prescribed amount of training in elementary education before they can be certificated as administrators, and (b) those who did not major in elementary education have taken many of the required elementary courses more recently than those who took them as undergraduate students. If this

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[20] Alan J. Rousseau, "The Relationship of Academic and Experience Variables to the Success of Elementary School Principals," (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, 1970).

speculation is justifiable, it would follow that school officials who select elementary principals should consider certified personnel on an equal basis rather than favoring those who were trained in elementary education during their undergraduate years.

The relationship between the amount of graduate training and administrative success appears to be highly inconclusive. The literature contains no solid evidence that the number of graduate courses assists the principal in performing his administrative tasks more effectively. The results of this study, though not conclusive, tend to support the findings of other researchers with several exceptions.

One can conclude from the findings of this study that the amount of graduate training in curriculum and supervision, and in social science and humanities courses, has no apparent relationship to the principal's administrative performance. Very little research has been published in this area. The research that does exist, however, contains inconclusive results as do the results of this study. Since school districts often define the principal's primary function as that of an instructional leader, it is somewhat surprising that researchers have not found curriculum training significantly related to administrative effectiveness.

Nor is the principal's function as a "leader of people" enhanced by his training in the social sciences and humanities. Yet this facet of training is strongly emphasized in many administrative preparation programs. It might be speculated, however, that the qualitative aspects of such training should be the primary focus of investigators, since the findings from this study as well as others fail to support any relationship of number of courses in the area discussed to effective leadership of people.

Trends in other studies suggest that a negative relationship exists between the amount of graduate training and administrative effectiveness, particularly training in educational administration. These findings are definitely inconsistent with the trend found in this study. A positive trend, though not statistically significant, was found to exist between the amount of training in educational administration and administrative effectiveness. This factor only emphasizes the contradictory evidence

available to support or reject such training for administrators. As with other graduate course work, attempts have apparently not been made to examine the qualitative aspects of administrative preparation programs and until this is done, conclusions cannot be reached.

The recency of graduate training does not appear to be a factor in administrative effectiveness. Those who have taken most of their graduate training within the last five years did not exhibit more effective administrative behavior than those who took their graduate work prior to that time.

Professional Experience

Principals who exhibited high success did not significantly differ from those who exhibited low success when compared on the basis of their elementary school teaching or principalship experience. There is much speculation in the literature regarding the value of teaching experience to administrative effectiveness. Results of previous research related to this speculation seemed to be contradictory. It has been suggested that extensive teaching experience results in mediocre administrators without any clear definition as to what constitutes "extensive" teaching experience. Many variables can affect these results, however. For one thing, those with more experience as teachers prior to their appointments to principalships tend to be older. Age, some say, has a negative relationship to administrative effectiveness. Others speculate that "good" administrative prospects are recognized early in their teaching careers and that those appointed in later years are often second-choice appointments. Though not significant, the results of this study indicated that principals with more elementary school teaching experience tended to be slightly more effective than less experienced administrators. Upon examination, however, it was found that principals in the research population tended to be younger than a more general population of principals. Therefore, few had "extensive" teaching experience. No conclusions can be drawn from these results except to say that there is some evidence to support the notion that teaching experience may have value for the administrator but that the optimum amount of experience is unknown.

The value of administrative experience to the principal's effectiveness is highly speculative. An examination of data in this study revealed a trend which seemed to favor those who had more principalship experience. As reported previously in the discussion of the value of teaching experience, other variables may intercede, particularly the variable of age. Again, the principals in this research population appeared to be less experienced and younger than a general population of principals. The positive trend resulting from this study might be interpreted to mean that "moderately" experienced principals are more effective than newly appointed principals. If this speculation is valid, public school officials who select principals might do well to give favorable consideration to those who have had a "moderate" amount of principalship experience.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Since the findings of this study are not intended to be generalized beyond the research population, other investigations utilizing a larger population might have several advantages. For one, variables such as sex and age could be included by using cross-tabulation procedures. Another potential advantage of a larger population would be to employ greater demarcation between high and low success groups. For example, with a larger number of subjects, the extreme ends of the success continuum (i.e., 20 percent) could be statistically compared. Had this been possible in this study, the trends observed may have resulted in significant differences.

Using scholarship records (G.P.A.) as a measure of intelligence seems questionable. Those interested in intellectual ability as a factor in administrative success might consider using more direct measures of intelligence such as available standardized tests.

Investigators interested in the relationship of academic training to principals' administrative success might identify such relationships if they would concentrate on the qualitative aspects of preparation programs. At this point, investigations focused on determining the relationship of

the amount of training to administrative success have produced inconclusive results. Admittedly, the quality of training is difficult to assess and would present a severe challenge to future investigators.

Most educators agree that some teaching and some administrative experience are beneficial to the performance of administrators. The disagreements basically lie with the question of "How much is too much?" Further investigations that could help answer this question would be highly beneficial to public school administrators.

The wisdom of determining the level of principals' administrative success by teacher judgment alone raises several questions. Are teachers adequately trained in administrative theory and organization to make such judgments? Would school district officials and teams of administrative experts be more capable of making such judgments? Future investigators might consider these questions and attempt to determine administrative success by combining several observational methods rather than using just one. Multi-observational methods might also reduce the risks involved in gathering data only through the questionnaire technique. It might be advisable to gather data through observation, interview, and questionnaires. Using a combination of such methods might improve the validity and reliability of future studies.

Finally, do any academic and experiential factors really make the successful administrator what he is? Or is success the product of the man himself with all his individual complexities? This may be the "grand" question to which future investigators should direct themselves.

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APPENDIX A

PERCEPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE INTERACTION (PAI)

QUESTIONNAIRE

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

The code number at the top of this questionnaire is for the purpose of identifying the responses for purposes of tabulation. The code key is known only to the researcher and will be kept in strictest confidence.

This questionnaire is composed of thirty-six statements related to school functioning. In the left-hand column, please fill in the space assigned to the number which best describes your feeling about the statement as it applies to <u>your school and your principal</u>. The numbers mean:

6. Almost always true in my school
5. Usually true in my school
4. Often true in my school
3. Sometimes true in my school
2. Rarely true in my school
1. Almost never true in my school

---

6 5 4 3 2 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 1. Possible problems or issues are anticipated.

0 0 0 0 0 0 2. Situations in the school where real problems exist are recognized and acknowledged.

0 0 0 0 0 0 3. All relevant information is obtained before decisions are made.

0 0 0 0 0 0 4. Sources of information are weighed carefully.

0 0 0 0 0 0 5. All elements relating to problems or issues are taken into account.

0 0 0 0 0 0 6. Unique possible solutions are considered for school problems.

0 0 0 0 0 0 7. Possible solutions to a problem are weighed critically.

0 0 0 0 0 0 8. Consideration is given to the important implications of a course of action.

6. Almost always true in my school
5. Usually true in my school
4. Often true in my school
3. Sometimes true in my school
2. Rarely true in my school
1. Almost never true in my school

6 5 4 3 2 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 9. Solutions, once agreed upon, reflect critical and logical thinking.

0 0 0 0 0 0 10. Teachers are kept informed of central office policy changes affecting the school.

0 0 0 0 0 0 11. The community and parents are kept aware of the accomplishments of the school and the students.

0 0 0 0 0 0 12. Teachers are kept informed as to how their work is evaluated.

0 0 0 0 0 0 13. Staff members discuss their problems and concerns freely with each other.

0 0 0 0 0 0 14. Teachers and parents feel free to make suggestions for improving the school.

0 0 0 0 0 0 15. Staff members know how people feel about the school and its program.

0 0 0 0 0 0 16. Teachers express their opinions and feelings freely.

0 0 0 0 0 0 17. The staff has a good knowledge of the feelings and opinions of the children about the school.

0 0 0 0 0 0 18. There is good communication between the teachers and other members of the school staff (custodians, cafeteria workers, etc.)

0 0 0 0 0 0 19. Adequate help and supervision are provided for teachers.

0 0 0 0 0 0 20. An effective system of pupil discipline is supported and maintained.

0 0 0 0 0 0 21. Adequate materials needed for instruction are available.

6. Almost always true in my school
5. Usually true in my school
4. Often true in my school
3. Sometimes true in my school
2. Rarely true in my school
1. Almost never true in my school

6 5 4 3 2 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 22. Teachers are not overloaded with non-teaching assignments (hall duty, yard supervision, etc.)

0 0 0 0 0 0 23. After-school activities are organized so that they function smoothly.

0 0 0 0 0 0 24. Schedules required for the effective operation of the school are made.

0 0 0 0 0 0 25. Buildings and grounds are maintained in a satisfactory manner.

0 0 0 0 0 0 26. An effective system of providing special education services for the pupils is supported and maintained.

0 0 0 0 0 0 27. There is an adequate system for reporting the progress of pupils to their parents.

0 0 0 0 0 0 28. Experimentation and new approaches in instruction occur reasonably often.

0 0 0 0 0 0 29. There is a constant evaluation of the total learning program.

0 0 0 0 0 0 30. New ideas and information relating to education are regularly discussed.

0 0 0 0 0 0 31. New developments in each instructional area are called to the staff's attention.

0 0 0 0 0 0 32 Information is regularly available on new teaching materials, aids, resources, etc.

0 0 0 0 0 0 33. Current events of significance and importance for the school are regularly discussed.

0 0 0 0 0 0 34. The staff's attention is called to important and interesting articles or publications.

6. Almost always true in my school
5. Usually true in my school
4. Often true in my school
3. Sometimes true in my school
2. Rarely true in my school
1. Almost never true in my school

6 5 4 3 2 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 35. Released time is available for teachers to work on special projects or ideas designed to improve the school program (visit schools, work on curriculum committees, attend professional conferences, etc.)

0 0 0 0 0 0 36. High standards of academic achievement and learning are expected of students.